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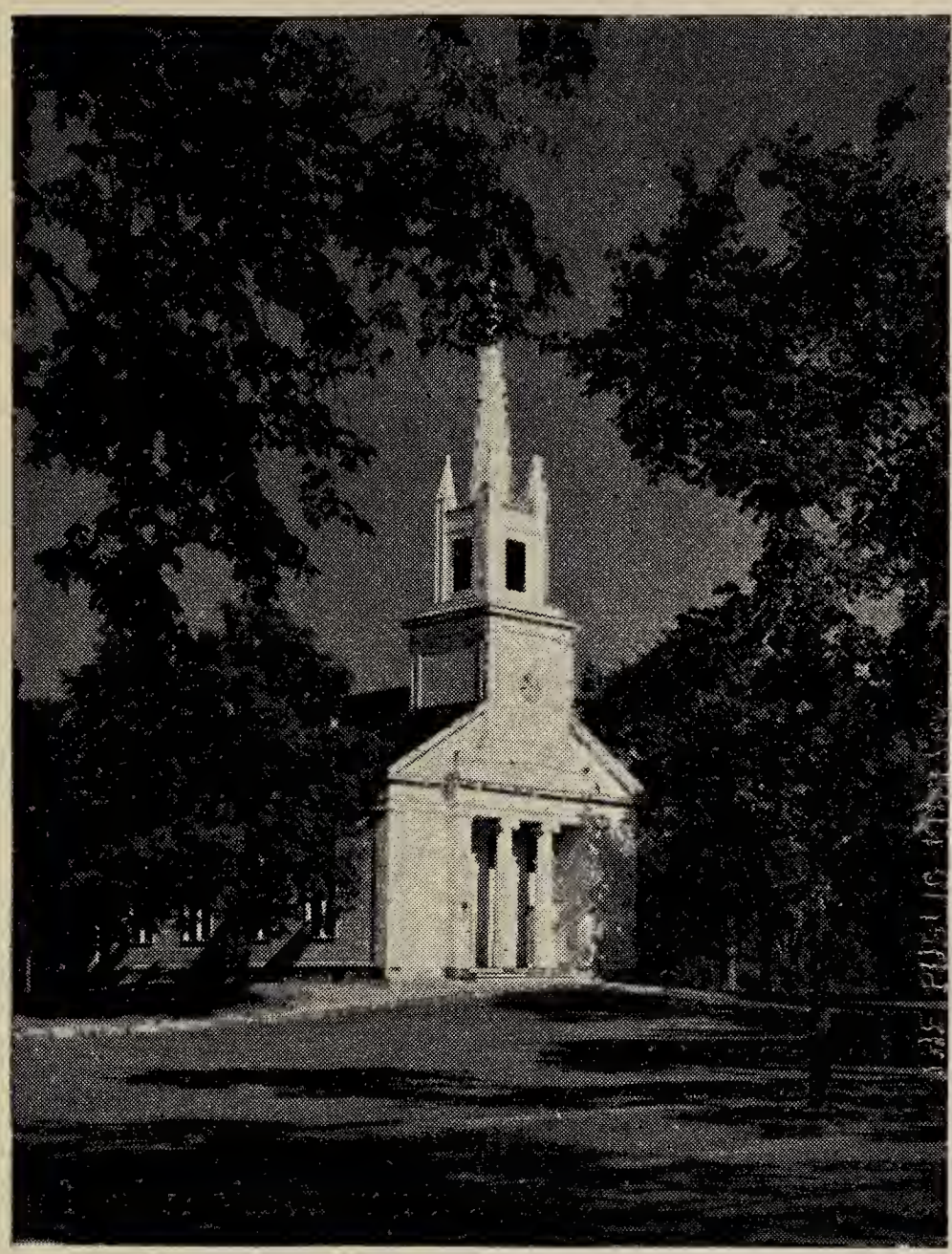
TOPSFIELD, Mass.
TERCENTENARY

1650 - 1950

SOUVENIR PROGRAM

Topsfield, Massachusetts
August 1950



Photograph by Samuel Chamberlain

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
On the Topsfield Village Green

TOPSFIELD TERCENTENARY

1650-1950

The COMMONWEALTH *of* MASSACHUSETTS

In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Fifty

RESOLUTIONS CONGRATULATING THE TOWN OF TOPSFIELD UPON THE THREE HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF ITS INCORPORATION

WHEREAS, In the year sixteen hundred and forty-eight the village at the Newe Medowes at Ipswich was set apart and became known as Toppesfield, and on October eighteenth in the year sixteen hundred and fifty was established as a town with the name Topsfield; and

WHEREAS, The people of this beautiful and picturesque town, with its rolling hills and sweeping valleys, rich in history and tradition, have long contributed to the greatness of this Commonwealth; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the General Court extends to the town of Topsfield its congratulations upon the three hundredth anniversary of its incorporation; and be it further

RESOLVED, That copies of these resolutions be forwarded by the Secretary of State to the town clerk of the town of Topsfield to be filed with the records in the archives of the town.

In House of Representatives, adopted, May 23, 1950
LAWRENCE R. GROVE, Clerk.

In Senate, adopted, in concurrence, May 31, 1950
IRVING N. HAYDEN, Clerk.

A true copy. Attest:
EDWARD J. CRONIN
Secretary of the Commonwealth

CURTIS CAMPBELL
Chairman, Topsfield Tercentenary Committee

1987604

WELCOME TO TOPSFIELD

Few towns in the United States have come to the 300th anniversary of their incorporation. It is even more rare for a town to have retained unspoiled most of the features which appealed so powerfully to its settlers over 300 years ago.

On or near the beautiful Topsfield Village Green, so loved by our ancestors down through the years and preserved much as they knew it, will be held most of the Tercentenary exercises and festivities.

On behalf of the large membership of the Tercentenary Committee and the much larger group of Topsfield's people who otherwise have had some hand in the preparations, may I extend through this booklet a warm welcome to all visitors. May I also express deep appreciation for the good wishes and congratulations being sent to us from near and far.

CURTIS CAMPBELL
Chairman

$4.50 Settle Feb 1-1978 PO 86556

Photograph by Samuel Chamberlain

THE PARSON CAPEN HOUSE
Built in 1683

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St. Margaret's Church, Toppesfield, England. Rev. Ralph Williams, the Rector, is standing by the porch.

Toppesfield means Topp's open land or clearing. Topp was the Saxon Chieftain who came sailing across the North Sea in his longboat from the Friesian Islands about 550 A.D. and founded the little community of Toppesfield, England, in a clearing which he made in the primeval forest which then covered Essex.

The church is of uncertain date but records show that the nave was lengthened and a tower added about 1330. The porch in this picture was added in the 15th century.

A LETTER *from* TOPPESFIELD, ENGLAND

Telephone:
GREAT YELDHAM 206

TOPPESFIELD HALL
GREAT YELDHAM
ESSEX

6th June, 1950.

The people of Toppesfield, Essex, England, send Greetings and Congratulations to the people of Topsfield, Massachusetts, on the occasion of their tercentenary celebrations.

We shall be thinking of you during your week of special events: August 13th to 19th.

Once again we would like to thank you and say how much we have appreciated your kindness to us over the past years.

F. St. G. Unwin
Chairman
Parish Council

TOPSFIEL

Sunday, August 13, thro

TIME	EVENT	SPONSOR OR COMMITTEE	PLACE
SUNDAY			
10:00-10:45 A.M.	Mass and Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament	St. Rose Catholic Church	St. Rose Church
11 A.M.-12 NOON	Tercentenary Service Sermon "The Wells Our Fathers Dug"	Congregational Church	Congregational Church
12:30 P.M.	Home Cooked Chicken Dinner*	Village Guild	Parish House
3:30 P.M.	Historical and Literary Exercises: Greetings from Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr. Historical Address by James Duncan Phillips. Selections by Beverly Men's Singing Club	Historical Exercises and Music Committees	Tent on School Grounds
WEDNESDAY			
2:45-5:30 P.M.	Children's Parade and Country Fair	Community Club	Village Green
5:00-7:00 P.M.	Old-Fashioned Bean Supper*	Ladies of St. Rose	Tent on School Grounds
8:30-12:00 P.M.	Country Dance*— Joe Perkins Calling	Community Club	Town Hall or Te
THURSDAY			
1:00-5:00 P.M.	Open Houses and Gardens* and Enactment of Historical Incidents	Open Houses and Incidental Events Committee and Topsfield Historical Society	Capen House, School, Library Town Hall, Se Old Residences Other Places

ERCENTENARY

rturday, August 19, 1950

ME	EVENT	SPONSOR OR COMMITTEE	PLACE
RIDAY			
r)0-5:00 P.M.	Sports Program for Children 6 to 12 years of age	Sports Committee	School Athletic Field
a P.M.-1 A.M.	Tercentenary Costume Ball	Ball Committee	Tent on School Grounds
ATURDAY			
30-3:15 P.M.	Tercentenary Parade with Reviewing Stand	Parade Committee	Main and Other Streets
15-5:30 P.M.	Sports Program for Older Children	Sports Committee	School Athletic Field
)0-7:00 P.M.	Band Concert	Music Committee	Village Green
30-7:30 P.M.	Banquet* with Greetings from Distinguished Guests	Banquet Committee	Tent on School Grounds
5 P.M.	Baseball Game* under Lights —Topsfield vs. New England Hoboes (former college and all stars)	Sports Committee	School Athletic Field
30 P.M.	Fireworks Display	Fireworks Committee	School Athletic Field

In case of rain—Thursday program will take place Friday.
Saturday parade and Sports Program will take place Sunday.

* Reservations, tickets or small contributions required.

We extend a most cordial welcome to all.

Reception of Visitors Committee
GILBERT L. STEWARD, *Chairman*

(Turn to Page 39)

The Story of Topsfield

1650-1950

by Alice G. Dow

SHE-NE-WE-MEDY (the pleasant place by the flowing waters) was the name given by the Indians of the Agawam tribe to the locality which early settlers called "New Meadows," and later was named Topsfield for the small town of Toppesfield in the County of Essex in England, in which some of the early settlers had originated.

In early days the Indians frequented the banks of the Agawam, later known as the Ipswich River, and excellent specimens of stone implements made by them have been found in the locality. A fine stone paint pot and a large stone mortar used for grinding corn, excavated in this vicinity, are exhibited at the Peabody Museum in Salem.

Indians lived in and about Topsfield for some years after its settlement. The last mention of them in the Town Records is in 1750, when the Town voted to allow charges for the care of Samll Tutoo "a free indian" in his last sickness.

Among those who were given grants of land in "the village upon Ipswich Ryver" were Governor John Endecott, who received a grant of 550 acres in 1639, and Governor Simon Bradstreet, who was granted 500 acres, and whose descendants are still living here: John Winthrop, Jr., a son of Governor Winthrop, and others. All of these grants, which were made before the village became a town, amounted to more than one-half of its present acreage. There still remained many acres of common land, and the Town Records and Proprietors' Book tell the story of the division and apportionment, until only the Training Field remained.

During the last decade of the seventeenth century the witchcraft delusion cast its dark shadow over the Town. Topsfield's connection came about because of disputes over boundaries and the ownership of land, between the Putnams of Salem Village (Danvers) and the Town of Topsfield, and suits and counter suits for many years had caused bitter feelings. Finally the General Court gave a decision in favor of Topsfield which of course added to the bitterness. It has been stated by a descendant that one of the Putnams stood out against the witchcraft delusion, and kept a horse in the woods near his house, ready for his escape westward if the feeling turned against him. Through the suits the names of Towne, Easty, and Wildes frequently appear.

Among the first to be accused of witchcraft was Rebecca Nurse, of Salem Village (Danvers), a daughter of William Towne and a sister of the Towne who had recovered the so-called Putnam land through a lawsuit. Sarah, the wife of John Wildes of Topsfield, who lived on what is now Perkins Street, was also arrested, and on July 19, 1692, they were both hanged on Gallows Hill, Salem; Mary Easty, sister of Rebecca Nurse and daughter of William Towne, living on what is now Pierce Farm Hill, was arrested on complaint of the Putnams, being seized at midnight, chained and carried to the jail in Salem. Here she was imprisoned for nearly five months and finally hanged on Gallows Hill in September, 1692. She spent her last days in an earnest endeavor to save others from her terrible fate. She was called Mary "the self-forgetful," after she wrote a remarkable petition to the Judges from the prison where she was confined, asking not for her own life, but that "no more innocent blood may be shed."

From the beginning provision was made for the "publicke worship of God," and tradition places the first meeting house near the junction of Meeting House Lane and Howlett Street, which was then about the center of the settlement. In 1663 a meeting house was built in what is now the lower end of Pine Grove Cemetery, to better accommodate the farmers of Rowley Village (Boxford), who at first joined with Topsfield both in worship and military drills. The affairs of the Church were in charge of the Town from its incorporation in 1650 until the creation of the Parish by Act of Legislature in 1823, and the choice of the minister and even the seating of the worshippers was decided by a committee appointed by the Town. The men's seats were on one side and the women's seats on the other, and all were watched over by the tything-man who carried a staff with a hare's tale attached, to touch those who were dozy. No mention is made of the children but in Salem the children were placed on the stairs leading to the pulpit.

In 1703 a meeting house was built upon "the plain by Mr. Capens," known as the Common, and the present Congregational Church is the third house of worship to be erected there.

No minister of the early days made a greater impression on the life of the Town than Parson Capen. Soon after he began his pastorate in 1682, he married Priscilla Appleton of Ipswich and built the house which still bears his name and is now owned by the Topsfield Historical Society. He led the people wisely and well for over forty years until his death in 1725.

Rev. John Emerson, who followed as minister in 1728, held the longest pastorate in the Church —forty-six years. In 1733-4 a house was built for him on the site of the Balch-Jordan house facing the Common, and his study has been retained in the present structure.

A Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1830, and the next year a Church building was erected on the Newburyport Turnpike. The minister lived in a house nearby and his "housekeeping goods" were supplied by the Society, as well as his Sunday morning breakfast of beans and brown bread, hot from the brick oven of a parishioner who lived near. Ten years later, as the congregation was made up largely of people from the Village, the meeting house was moved to that part of the Town, and located on Main Street, the building mover using fifty yoke of oxen for the job. This building was used until 1854 when the meeting house facing the Common was built.

At that time, there being no public hall of any size, the lower story was used for that purpose and known as Union Hall. Here Town meetings were held and at the outbreak of the Civil War there were many stirring meetings. When a question was closely contested, the voters adjourned to the Common to be lined up by the Constables to count the yeas and nays.

The two Protestant Churches were federated in 1925 in order to conserve their resources, and in 1938 the local Methodist Episcopal Society was dissolved and the building is now used as a Parish House.

For many years those of the Catholic faith residing in Town attended Mass in Danvers. Services were held in Grange Hall from 1914 until 1922, when St. Rose's Church was built. Recently a Rectory has been provided for the Parish.

As early as 1631 the General Court provided for frequent exercise of the train bands, to which every able-bodied man between the ages of 16 and 45 had to belong. It was necessary for each town to have a training field and the Common of today is a part of that old training field. No record exists to show that Indian hostilities occurred within the Town but in 1675 the Town voted to build a stone fort about the meeting house, which was located in what is now Pine Grove Cemetery, and no doubt the farmers carried weapons as well as tools when they went into the fields to work. Topsfield men took part in all of the French and Indian wars and several of them lost their lives.

The story of Topsfield's part in the Revolution is shown in the Town records. In 1770 the voters took their stand against the exactions of Parliament and after the "Boston Tea Party" they voted not to buy or sell tea until the duty was removed. On Oct. 11, 1774, Topsfield sent Samuel Smith as its representative to the first Continental Congress. War was now expected but the Colonists were not wholly unprepared. The Provincial Congress adopted a plan for organizing the militia. The Training Band was made up of all able-bodied male persons from 16 to 50 years old; the Alarm List included all others up to the age of 70 and a quarter of these were enlisted as Minute Men to hold themselves ready to march at a minute's notice. It is said that when the alarm reached Town about ten o'clock on the morning of April 19, 1775, the farmers dropped their tools in the fields and left at once. Most of them were in service five days at this time and marched sixty miles to and from home; Captain Gould received £1.6.5, and the privates received 12s. 1¾d.

A good number of Topsfield men served in the various campaigns of the war, and the Town was called upon from time to time to contribute its share of beef, hay, grain, blankets, and clothing.

During the first half of the nineteenth century nearly every town in the State had its local infantry company and the State required regular military training. The Topsfield Warren Blues were organized in 1836 and each man paid $40 for his uniform and equipment. Training days were a great attraction and on one occasion there was a band concert after the drill, and a grand ball in the evening at Cummings' Hotel on the Turnpike.

McIntire doorway on the Jordan House, facing the Village Green.

Photograph by Samuel Chamberlain

Peabody-Waters-Patten House
Built in 1672

The citizens of Topsfield have always been patriotic and in all the later wars have borne an honorable part.

The Town records contain many references to schools and schoolmasters. In the early days school was kept in various houses and moved from place to place to accommodate the children. The first schoolhouse was built on the South side of the Town, and later four district schools were built and school was kept in each schoolhouse in rotation. These schools were taught by men in the winter and by women in the summer.

Early in the nineteenth century privately supported academies were established in various towns in Essex County to provide the equivalent of a High School education. The Topsfield Academy was incorporated and a building erected, in 1828, on the hill back of the present fire station. One of the instructors was Benjamin Greenleaf, the author of the well-known series of arithmetics.

After over thirty successful years the Academy was closed and the building sold to the Town. It is estimated that at least 1200 pupils were educated there. Later when the new brick school was built by the Town, the Academy building was sold and torn down. The bell is preserved in the Museum of the Topsfield Historical Society.

The Town bought the old Academy building in 1868 and the Center, primary, and grammar schools were moved into it. In 1896 all the district schools were discontinued and the pupils were transported to the Center school in horse-drawn barges, which were later superseded by school busses.

At this time a High School wa established in the building, and vari ous additions were made as growtl necessitated, until in 1933 the pres ent brick building was erected o land given to the Town by the lat Thomas E. Proctor.

There were a number of privat schools carried on in Town, and a one time singing schools were ver popular. One of the latter was con ducted by Jacob Kimball, a nativ of Topsfield, and the noted compose of "Essex Harmony," which con tained a hymn dedicated to Tops field, as well as to other towns i the County.

The first library in town was tha of the Topsfield Library Society or ganized in 1794. Each member paid twent shillings which was used for the purchase o books, and the library was to be kept withi one mile of the meeting house and be open th last Monday of each month from one to four i the afternoon when each member might take ou one book.

In 1796 it was voted to purchase a bookcas for the library which has been preserved an now stands in the Town Library building, hold ing many of the books owned by the Librar Society. A broadside listing the books is dis played inside of one of the doors. The use o the library having declined, it was voted in 185 to place it in the Academy building in the car of the Principal.

There were several shareholders' libraries, in cluding one devoted to the improvement of farm ing methods. The Ladies' Society of the Con gregational Church had collected a library o about 250 volumes which was circulated amon the members. At each meeting a clothes baske full of books was brought to be exchanged fo books which were returned. It was a genera collection, with books of history and travel bu very little fiction.

In 1875 when the free Town Library was estab lished, all of these private collections were gen erously given to the Town. The Library was lo cated in the Town Hall, at first in the small room at the left of the entrance, and later moved t another part of the Town Hall, where it remaine until 1934 when the present Library building was erected.

(Turn to Page 23)

A TOUR OF TOPSFIELD

OPEN HOUSES

Open 1 P.M. to 5 P.M. Thursday, August 17th, or the next day if the weather interferes.

The Parson Capen House 1683	Howlett Street off the Common
The Emerson-Holmes-Choate House 1814	On the Common
Topsfield Library (Historical Exhibits)	On the Common
The Congregational Church 1842	On the Common
St. Rose's Church 1922	Park Street
Meredith Farm 1768	Cross Street
The Peabody-Wellman House 1772	Wenham Street
The Gould-Fuller-Abbott House 1700	Washington Street
The Gould-Huntington-English House 1765	Washington Street

A TOUR of Topsfield should start at the Common. This is the beautiful and historic center of the town and here, in early days, were drilled the local men who marched to Lexington and Concord. Facing the Common is the Topsfield Library. On the second floor of the Library you'll see the Topsfield Historical Society's interesting display of exhibits relating to local history. After you have seen these, you should next visit the Parson Capen House, just off the Common.

THE PARSON CAPEN HOUSE, built in 1683 by Rev. Joseph Capen, has an overhanging second story, with brackets each side of the front door, and ornamental drops at the corners. The third story overhangs at the gable ends. The front door is copied from the old "Indian" door at Deerfield, Mass. The rooms on the lower floor, with period furniture, are open to the public for a small fee. The house is owned by the Topsfield Historical Society and is considered one of the best seventeenth century houses in New England. The kitchen has been reproduced in the Metropolitan Museum in New York.

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, built in 1842, also faces the Common.

On this location a meeting-house was erected in 1703, a small hill having been leveled for the purpose. In 1759-60 a second meeting-house was built upon the same site. This was moved away in 1842 when the present edifice was built.

The bell that hangs in the steeple is inscribed "Revere & Company, Boston 1817."

The present minister is Rev. Roderick W. Hurlburt and he is the 26th successive minister of the parish.

THE EMERSON-JORDAN HOUSE (not open) at the right and facing the Common, built in 1808, is a three-story, hip-roof house with the westerly end of brick. The easterly end is four stories and includes the study and chamber of the Rev. John Emerson house, built about 1734. It is owned and occupied by Harold F. Jordan.

Photograph by Samuel Chamberlain

The Emerson-Holmes-Choate House, formerly the Congregational Parsonage, built in 1814

Turn right on Ipswich Road and continue to the Newburyport Turnpike. Turn right on the Turnpike and turn right, under Dry Bridge. The first house is the

FRENCH-ANDREWS-CAROTHERS HOUSE on Howlett Street. This house was built for John French in 1675 and sold to Joseph Andrews in 1718. Before 1793 it was raised to two stories and the easterly end added. It is now owned and occupied by C. J. Carothers.

Bear right on Perkins Row to High Street. Turn left on High Street keeping straight, then turn right on Wenham Street and the second house on the right is

THE PEABODY-WELLMAN HOUSE. The eastern end of this house is quite old. It was taxed to Jacob Dwinell, Jr., as early as 1772, and the property was sold to John Peabody in 1782. It was remodeled by John Peabody, Jr., in 1807, and the western end was added at that time. The granite for the foundation was hauled by oxen from Quincy, thirty-five miles away. It remained in the Peabody name until it was purchased by Sargent H. Wellman in 1921. An extensive addition was made at that time. It is now owned and occupied by Sargent H. Wellman.

Turn right on Wenham Street to Salem Road. On the corner of Salem Road is

THE PEABODY-WATERS-PATTEN HOUSE (not open), a two-story house with lean-to roof. According to tradition it was built during the pastorate of Rev. Jeremiah Hobart (1672-1682). It is now owned by Mrs. Lucile Burroughs and Mrs. Polly Davis, daughters of the late Chester S. Patten.

Turn right on Salem Road to Newburyport Turnpike. Cross Turnpike on Salem Road. Turn left on Hill Street, then right on Cross Street and visit

MEREDITH FARM, a modern dairy and poultry farm owned by Mr. and Mrs. David Lampert, was developed by the late Edward Wigglesworth. In 1825 Deacon George Bixby bequeathed the estate to the Selectmen of the Town in trust, the income to be applied to the support of ministers of the Congregational denomination in Topsfield, and the farm to be known as "The donation farm for the support of the Gospel." The present farm house was built about 1768. The farm buildings only will be open to visitors.

Photograph by Samuel Chamberlain

Interior, Parson Capen House

After leaving Meredith Farm turn right on Cross Street to Rowley Bridge Road, then turn left on River Road and right on Washington Street to the

GOULD-FULLER-ABBOTT HOUSE, Washington Street. This two-story house, built about 1700, has a plastered cove which has been boarded over. It is now owned and occupied by William C. Abbott.

On the left hand side of Washington Street where it turns back towards the village is the

GOULD-HUNTINGTON-ENGLISH HOUSE, Washington Street. This two-story house was built for Deacon John Gould about 1765. Captain Benjamin Gould of Revolutionary fame lived here in 1778-9. The property was sold in 1791 to Rev. Asahel Huntington, who was settled over the Church in 1789. It is now owned and occupied by Benjamin W. English.

Follow Washington Street to Main Street, cross Main Street and turn right to the

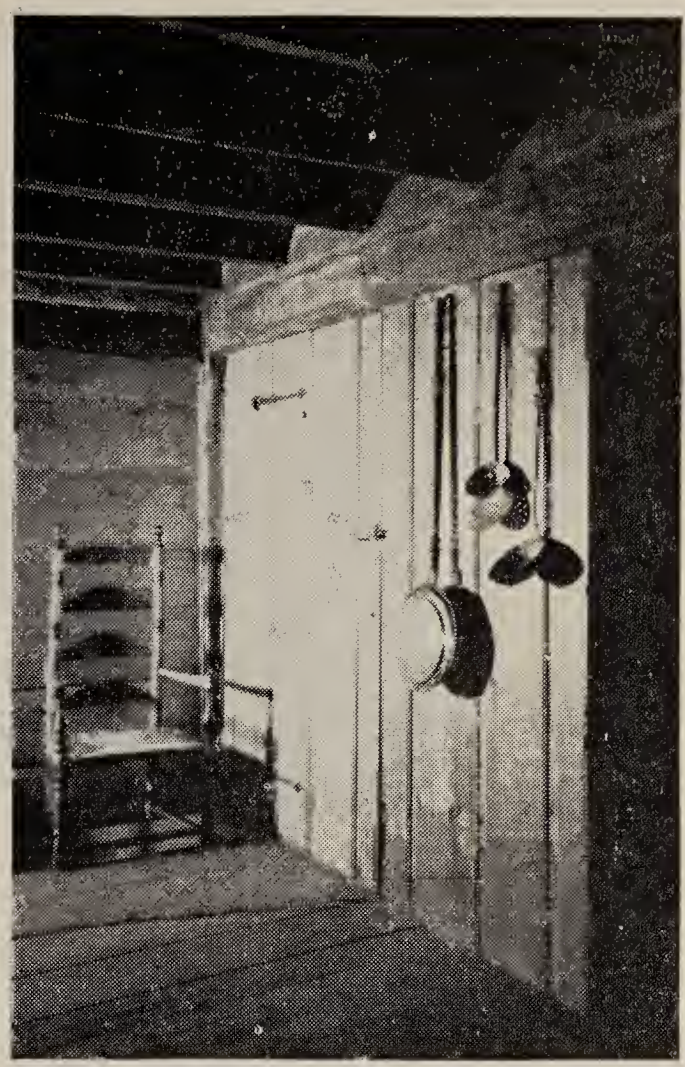
THE EMERSON-HOLMES-CHOATE HOUSE on the left facing the Common was built in 1814. A two-story hip-roof house with balustrade and a good sexagonal porch. It is owned and occupied by Mrs. Katharine S. Choate.

On Thursday afternoon there will be incidental events, including craft demonstrations, brief historical tableaux, etc. An Indian family and their wigwam life will be depicted during the afternoon at the various houses and on or near the Village Green.

OTHER POINTS OF INTEREST:

EARLY SCHOOLHOUSE. The first schoolhouse to be built in the center of the town formerly stood at the right of the Congregational Church, near Washington Street. It was built in 1795, and in 1845 was sold and moved to Haverhill Street near Hood's Pond, and made into a dwelling house, with a brick basement.

THE KIMBALL - WILDES - HUTCHINGS HOUSE, Main Street, was a two-story house probably built in 1756 for Jacob Kimball, and stood on Main Street where High Streeet now joins Main Street. In this house was born in 1761, Jacob Kimball, the noted composer. He was the author of "Rural Harmony" 1793, and "Essex Harmony," 1800. This house was removed to High Street and remodeled in 1913. It is now the Parsonage of the Congregational Church.



Photograph by Samuel Chamberlain

Interior, Parson Capen House

THE TOPSFIELD ACADEMY, located at the top of the hill on School Avenue at the left side of Main Street, flourished between 1828 and 1868. The building was later used as the Center Schoolhouse, until the present brick schoolhouse was erected. It was then sold and torn down. The bell is preserved in the Museum of the Topsfield Historical Society.

SHOE MANUFACTORIES, on Main Street, near the Post Office, the factory of Charles Herrick on the southerly side of the street and that of John Bailey nearly opposite, were operated from 1850 until after the Civil War. It is said that at one time Topsfield shipped as many as 200,000 pairs annually, many of them going to the South and West. The Herrick factory became the property of the Topsfield Grange and was used by them until it was destroyed by fire in 1940.

MUNDAY'S HOTEL. The building on the corner of Main and Park Streets was built in 1809 by Thomas Meady, who used it for a tavern and store until 1817. It was carried on for a few years by Ephraim Wildes and in 1825 was sold to Capt. William Munday. It was carried on by the Mundays until after the Civil War and was well known in stagecoach days.

(Turn to Page 28)

Photograph by Samuel Chamberlain

THE FRENCH-ANDREWS-CAROTHERS HOUSE
Built in 1675

I REMEMBER, I REMEMBER

by Mrs. Edith M. Andrews

FIFTY years ago, with no movies, radio or other such means of amusement, the young people of Topsfield were obliged to provide their own entertainment,—certainly a tame and unusual undertaking for the youth of today.

In good weather we would take long walks in the woods, and perhaps climb Great Hill and have a picnic lunch. Or we would go hunting for birds to see how many different kinds we could find,—and what delight when we would see a beautiful scarlet tanager! On crisp winter afternoons and evenings skating parties would be held on the river meadows behind the Fair grounds, with a huge bonfire to provide the necessary atmosphere and warmth.

Oh yes,—the Church socials. What fun they were! They were held at different homes. We'd play games, sing and have a promenade instead of dancing. A cup would be passed around and each person was supposed to contribute five cents. Ice cream was not available at the stores in those days, so various people would make a freezer of the homemade kind. The ice cream was wonderful, although the choice of flavors was limited, with vanilla and lemon being the most popular. I remember one social held at Deacon Charles Peabody's home when the hostess said we would play games but *no kissing games.*

Then there were the amateur theatricals, the Eureka Club, composed of Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Poor, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Potter, Mrs. M. E. Gould and Henry Peabody. They certainly were kept busy for they were considered the best in Essex County. They played for many out-of-town organizations as well as the Odd Fellows here. Other excellent theatrical clubs followed the Eureka Club, and I am sure that if talent scouts were around then, many of our town talent would have landed in Hollywood.

One most popular event was the Butcher's ball. The orchestra and entertainment for this affair came from Boston. There would first be a supper, and after the entertainment the dancing would continue until the wee hours of the morning.

Our minstrel shows were wonderful with the entire cast in black face. Messrs. Alphonso Merrill, Eben Merrill, Edward B. Woodbury and Charles Leach were the end men. Mr. Leach had a very fine voice and, by request, would sing the "Anvil Chorus." An anvil and hammer loaned by the village blacksmith, Mr. Ira Long, would be placed on the stage so that Mr. Leach could hammer out his own accompaniment. The Town Hall was packed for these shows.

The Topsfield Brass Band was the pride and joy of the Town. It was led by Mr. Henry Andrews. In the records one may find that they had their first performance on the Common. However, as both Churches were having their choir rehearsal at the same time, there was no perfect harmony within or without. Subsequent band rehearsals were held upstairs in the building on Central Street where Jacob Hardy had his harness shop.

Mr. J. Porter Gould was the Town milliner. His shop was located in Mr. William Kimball's store in the building which is now the home of

Mr. Harlan Greaves. Mr. Gould was also the Historical Clerk of the Congregational Church and sometimes his records were quite amusing. For example, at one time the Congregational Church was without an organist and Miss Bessie Cleveland was filling in. She brought anthem books from the Old South Church of Peabody for us to use. Mr. Gould in reading his records said "the choir sang a new anthem last Sunday, 'My God I Thank Thee'." Needless to say that was the title of the anthem. That same night he also spoke of the passing of Miss Helen Peabody, a talented elocutionist. He stated that he regretted to announce that she had passed on to the higher life in Essex.

How many remember Mr. William Long's livery stable? It was a rendezvous for the men of the town. Mr. Wilbur Hood, who lived on Central Street, was a frequent visitor. I am told that Mr. Hood was a man who did things by schedule. He would go home to dinner at a certain time and return at a given time. One day Mr. Long asked him to mail a letter on his way home to dinner. Mr. Hood replied that he would be pleased to but since he would have to cross the street he didn't see how he could. At that time the Post Office was located in the drug store.

In earlier years Mr. Benjamin Adams kept a grocery store as well as the Post Office in the building occupied until recently by Poor & Company. His method of delivering mail to those living on the outskirts of the town was certainly original. In those days people did not get into town very often so Mr. Adams would take the mail to Church, in his tall silk hat. One Sunday while bowing graciously to several ladies, he forgot the mail in his hat and spread it in all directions. The letters were finally recovered, however, and distributed to the rightful owners.

At one time Mr. Lyman Almy Perkins was the organist at the Congregational Church. I well remember one rehearsal held at his home "High Rock Cottage," now the home of Dr. Harry Perkins. We had rehearsed a new anthem containing an obligato which was taken by two ladies of the Choir. One note was an A flat and the ladies had taken it perfectly. At that time the freight was coming through from Newburyport and just as it reached Mr. Perkins' home it let out a shrill whistle exactly on the same note. The rehearsal immediately ended.

Every winter a singing school was conducted and this was quite popular with the young people. I recall that the last session was taught by Professor Bagley of Boston.

In looking through the records I find this one. Before the organ was installed in the Congregational Church Mr. Ephraim Averill was the leader of the Choir and no music was too difficult for him. He had a very fine voice and often sang the bass solo from "The Creation," but at times it was hard for him to cope with the jealous dispositions of the singers. There was the regular choir called the "Hornites" who were the followers of Moses Horn. In addition there was the Singing School led by Mr. Willey. One Sunday morning the Willeyites were in the seats of the Choir. Things began to happen and one bass singer sat in the lap of an alto and his avoirdupois caused her to vacate the seat. Mr. McLeod was the Minister at that time and as he read the hymn he announced there would be no singing and proceeded with his sermon.

The Ladies' Society installed a Stevens organ in the Church and as there was no pipe organ in any of the surrounding towns it received much praise for its beauty and power. Miss Lizzie Lake was the organist from 1874 to 1905, her salary being two dollars a Sunday. In 1907 the Stevens organ was sold and moved to Van Buren, Maine, where it was used in a French Catholic Church and so far as I know it is still being used in the service of God.

The year 1907 saw the new organ installed with Lyman Almy Perkins as organist. The choir sang very difficult selections under Mr. Perkins' able direction. When Mr. Perkins left for other fields Mrs. Eugene Dow was appointed organist and she also conducted the choir for about twenty-five years in a very able manner.

The T.B.B.A. used to play baseball on the Common. The home plate was located near the Methodist Church and many Church windows were broken by foul balls. Elmer Averill, Charles Floyd, and Edward Young played on that team. Later on, about 1913, there was another T.B.B.A. team with Patrick Collins as manager. Chester Williams, George Gerry, Leroy Young, Fred Burnham, Gilbert Jordan, Perley Jordan, Chester Andrews and Mark Hodges aided by a battery from Danvers made up the team. The crowds were large but the collections were small. At one time when the team needed uniforms, the Ladies' Whist Club gave an entertainment to raise the funds. The Ladies' Whist Club was organized nearly fifty years ago and is still in existence.

I remember the Topsfield Townsman, our local paper which was published weekly from Jan. 1893 to April 1899, with George Francis Dow and Albert M. Dodge, editors. The newspapers have records of husking bees and beach parties. One of the latter had an attendance of one hundred and fifty accompanied by the Boxford Brass Band. The event of the year was the beach party on Labor Day when nearly every one in town travelled to Ipswich Beach, now known as

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L. Palmer Lavallee
Arlo L. Roberts
Myron F. Peabody

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The Topsfield Historical Society

The Society owns and maintains the Parson Capen House located just off the Topsfield Common. The house was built in 1683. It was carefully and accurately restored and is an outstanding example of domestic architecture of its period. The kitchen has been reproduced in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City and the house itself is pictured in the Encyclopedia Britannica. The two ground-floor rooms with period furniture are open to visitors.

The Society has published over thirty volumes of historical data and records of the town. Interested persons will be welcome to membership. (Dues are One (1) dollar annually.)

In honor of the Town's tercentenary, a dinner plate showing the Parson Capen House has been designed and made at Vernon Kilns in Los Angeles, California, and may be ordered through the Society. Price $1.50 per plate, in pink or sepia color.

Topsfield Historical Society
Topsfield, Massachusetts

The year 1950 marks the 300th Anniversary of the founding of Topsfield—and the 111th Anniversary of the beginning of Pequot Mills in Salem.

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(From Page 18)

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Mrs. James Duncan Phillips
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William B. Cowen
Eugene M. Dow

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THE STORY OF TOPSFIELD

(From Page 12)

The Museum of the Topsfield Historical Society, located on the second floor of the Library building, contains good examples of furniture and many objects relating to the history of the Town. The Historical Society also owns the Parson Capen house, built in 1683, which is considered one the finest seventeenth century houses in the country. It has been restored and the lower floor, furnished with type furniture of the period, is open to the public.

The need for better roads between inland towns and a shorter route to Boston was evident early in the nineteenth century. As the towns were unable to assume the expense of building such roads, corporations were authorized by the State. The Newburyport Turnpike, the first road of its kind in eastern Massachusetts to receive a charter, was run in a straight line from Newburyport to Malden bridge, a distance of thirty-two miles. The building of the road was given out to several contractors, and the laborers received 5 or 6 shillings a day, which was from sunrise to sunset. Three toll houses were built and the one in Topsfield was near the top of River Hill. The toll rates here were one and sixpence, or about twenty-five cents, for a carriage with four wheels and drawn by four horses; carts and wagons with two horses paid half this amount; a one-horse chaise paid ten cents; a man on horseback, five cents; cattle were one cent each, and sheep or swine three cents a dozen. No toll was charged for persons going to public worship, of going to daily labor, on family business or on military duty.

The Eastern Stage Company, of which Dr. Nehemiah Cleveland of Topsfield was the first President, carried the U. S. mail over the Turnpike, saving two hours over the route by the old Post road. The great hills in Topsfield were dangerous and accidents not uncommon, and on this account some of the best stage drivers refused to drive coaches over the Turnpike. Halfway up the long hill toward the North, stood the Topsfield Hotel, which was a famous place for County gatherings. Here, in 1808, the Essex Junto met to consider "the alarming and ruinous condition of public affairs," a convention which was referred to by John Adams as the great Topsfield caucus, and which was denounced in Congress by Henry Clay. Here, in 1818 was organized the Essex Agricultural Society, and also in 1834 the Essex County Natural History Society, one of the two societies which were combined later as the Essex Institute.

(Turn to Page 25)

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THE STORY OF TOPSFIELD

(From Page 23)

The Eastern Stage Company flourished for twenty years, but with the coming of the railroad, the need for the Turnpike passed away, the County of Essex purchased it for a County road, and the toll houses were sold. For many years it was a grass-grown road but with the coming of the automobile it has been widened and improved and is now the main artery to Maine and New Hampshire.

The opening of the railroad was a great day for the townspeople. The first train was run from Georgetown to Topsfield on August 12, 1854, but the road was not open to the public until the following October. The next February the river bridge was carried away by a freshet and business had to be suspended for about a month.

Many amusing stories are told of the reactions of those opposed to the railroad. One man, weighing about two hundred pounds, seated himself in the center of the proposed road and had to be removed before the digging could go on; another, who had reserved a right of way across the tracks, made a point of crossing in front of the train so it had to stop to let him pass.

The first station was on Main Street, near the corner of Grove Street, and a new station was built on Park Street in 1897. The greater use of the automobile affected patronage of the road so much that later the tracks beyond Topsfield were taken up, and only one train each way is now operated. The Topsfield station was sold and removed.

The early industries of Topsfield were governed by necessity. As corn was one of the principal crops, grist mills were set up as early as 1664 and saw mills were built in 1672. The Peabody mills were run by that family for 164 years. Clay pits are mentioned in the Town records in 1674 and brick making was carried on until the brick yards were established in Danvers. Peat was used for fuel and a peat meadow was as essential as a woodlot. Bog iron was mined for local use, and iron works were established in 1668 just over the line in Rowley Village (Boxford). An attempt at mining copper, made as early as 1648 on the Endecott grant, is the earliest record of a copper mine in the English colonies but produced little copper.

Many of the farms grew flax, and sheep were raised for their wool, as spinning and weaving were an important part of the household work. There were also skilled weavers who went from house to house plying their trade; and tailors also who went into the homes making clothing for the family.

(Turn to Page 27)

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THE STORY OF TOPSFIELD

(From Page 27)

Tanning of leather was another early industry, and in 1718 a sealer of leather was elected by the Town. There were many cordwainers, and the men spent their time in the winter making shoes. Many of them had small shops near their houses, until 1850 when factories supplanted the small workshops. The manufacture of shoes was the only industry carried on in which many workers were employed. Some of the men and women came from the outlying districts, walking long distances to the factory, and working from seven o'clock in the morning until six at night. The largest shoe factories were those of Charles Herrick on one side of Main Street (the building later used by the Topsfield Grange), and that of John Bailey nearly opposite.

At one time the nursery business was carried on in Town by the Townes and Lakes, and thousands of fruit trees were sold annually. Many of the fine shade trees on our streets were given by the Lakes.

Other trades were blacksmithing, carpentry, coopering, wagon and carriage making, and the butchering of animals, of which large droves were driven from Boston over the Turnpike. At one time about 20,000 animals were slaughtered each year.

It may be of interest to know that a labor union existed in Topsfield before 1800. A record of a meeting held by the carpenters, housewrights and wheelwrights of Topsfield on February 28, 1793, gives the prices agreed upon for day labour, as well as for various kinds of work—including the making of sleighs, sleds and coffins.

It is also noteworthy that there are two blacksmiths in Town at the present time—John R. Gould who has been working at his trade here for fifty-one years, and Frederick Dingle who has been following that trade for forty-four years. Mr. Dingle has recently retired and sold his business.

The early storekeeper was important, and the housewives brought in their butter and eggs to trade for molasses, sugar and other things which they could not produce at home. In 1835 it is said that there were three country grocery stores in Topsfield. Nathaniel and Frederick Perley had a building on Main Street for a dwelling and store about 1830. They were followed by Benjamin P. Adams, and Joseph Bailey Poor took over the property about 1886, and it was owned and operated by that family for over fifty years.

The Essex Agricultural Society has its headquarters in Town, and the Essex County Co-Operative Association carries on a thriving business with the farmers of the County.

Lack of space prevents listing all the small shops of various kinds, but mention should be made of the printing business established here in 1884 by Alphonso T. Merrill. Here the Town Reports were printed each year, as well as much work from out of Town. After Mr. Merrill's death in 1914, William A. Perkins, who had been employed by him, purchased the business. The Perkins Press has printed the annual Town Reports of Boxford as well as those of Topsfield, and the Historical Collections of the Danvers Historical Society and the publications of the Topsfield Historical Society as well as material for local authors. The late George Francis Dow wrote many books on early New England history and other subjects, which were printed here.

As we look about us now we see that the highways have developed from Indian trails to the well-kept roads of today. In place of the Training Field we see the beautiful New England Common, with its setting of fine shade trees, and around it the white-spired Congregational Church and Parish House, the Town Hall, the Center School, the Town Library, and fine homes. The Main Street has up-to-date shops of various kinds, and the homes of the townspeople are protected by the well-equipped Fire Department and the new water supply.

May Topsfield prosper in the future as it has in the past, and continue to be "a pleasant place by the flowing waters."

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A TOUR OF TOPSFIELD

(From Page 15)

Just off Main Street on Park Street is ST. ROSE'S CHURCH, first established about 30 years ago as a mission of the Church of the Annunciation, Danvers, with services being held in the old Grange Hall on Main Street, St. Rose's Church became a separate parish five years ago with a resident pastor. The church was built in 1922 by Ovide Bouchard and the parish acquired a rectory last December through the generosity of Archbishop Richard J. Cushing. The church membership has grown from a handful to more than 300. The present pastor is the Rev. Joseph F. Bracken.

FIRST POST OFFICE. In the house which formerly stood on Main Street on the site now occupied by the home of C. Lawrence Bond, Dr. Nehemiah Cleaveland kept a tavern and here probably was located the first Post Office in town as Nehemiah Cleaveland, the first Postmaster, was appointed Jan. 1, 1803.

WITCHCRAFT. In the field on the right hand side of Main Street, just below Maple Street, stood the house of William Towne, built in 1651, and here at various times lived his three daughters who were accused of witchcraft and executed on Gallows Hill in Salem,—Rebecca, who married Francis Nurse and lived at Salem Village,—Mary, who married Isaac Easty, and Sarah who married Peter Cloyes, and lived near her sister in Salem Village.

DISPLACED PERSONS. In the old William Towne house, then over one hundred years old, the Dugoy family of French Acadians were lodged by the Town from Oct. 1756 to Aug. 1760. They were then removed to Newbury where two other Acadian families were located and the Town continued to contribute to their support. In 1767 the Town voted to pay their passage to Canada and support them on the voyage.

EARLY BRIDGE. Probably the first bridge in Town was the one across the Ipswich River, now known as Balch's Bridge, as it is mentioned in the Town records as early as 1653. Later other wooden bridges were built across the Ipswich River and as the planks were not fastened down, a rumbling sound was made when horses and wagons passed over them. Topsfield was formerly known as "the town with the rumbling bridges."

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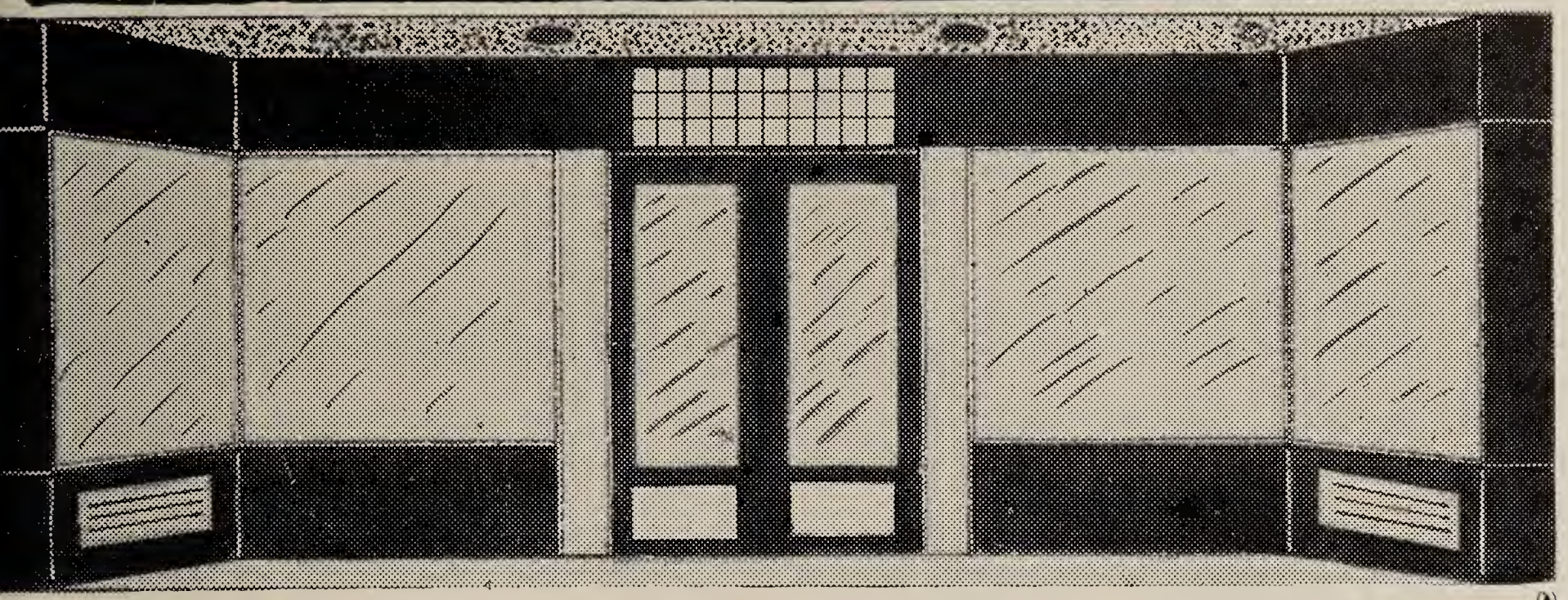

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I REMEMBER

(From Page 17)

Crane's Beach. Barges owned by Mr. I. M. Woodbury would be filled and every vehicle that could be obtained was hired for the day. Mr. Calvin Fuller prepared the clam chowder at the Beach. The day was taken up by games, walks over the dunes, and visits to the lighthouse, and many would go in bathing. The carriages and barges were driven right onto the beach and the barges also served as bath houses. When Mr. Fuller would urge someone to have more chowder and they answered that they were full, he replied, "Yes, but I am Fuller." As darkness fell all would start for home a tired but happy group. Many families immediately engaged the carriages from Mr. Long for the following year.

I remember well that at the dinner held on the 250th anniversary one of the speakers said that he had experienced great difficulty in finding Topsfield. No one he knew seemed to know where it was and he felt certain it could not be on the map. Deacon Charles Peabody, in responding to the speaker, said that he was surprised to learn that the gentleman had so much difficulty in locating Topsfield as it was on the map—in fact in the exact geographical center of Essex County. He also advised the gentleman that one could name quite a few Topsfield boys who had made a name for themselves in the busy world.

I remember when George Francis Dow organized the Historical Society. The meetings were held at his home and about fifty usually attended. Later on when the Historical Society purchased the Capen house, he had charge of the restoration of the house to its original appearance. When the work was completed a housewarming was held, and the rooms were lighted by candles. A supper of baked beans, brown and rye bread, pandowdy and Indian pudding and pumpkin and apple pies was served on wooden plates and eaten with broad-bladed knives and pewter spoons. We missed forks which were not in use in early times but enjoyed the beans and brown bread hot from the old brick oven.

Mr. Dow was active in securing the erection of the new Library building and the opening reception and inspection was a pleasant occasion. He collected material relating to the history of the town and it was published after his death by the Historical Society.

With the coming of the automobile I feel certain that Topsfield is far better known than it was fifty years ago. Our Common is one of the most beautiful examples of the early New England village green, and people travel far to admire its beauty. May her sons and daughters be proud to call Topsfield our "Home Town."

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EVENTS

(From Page 9)

BANQUET SATURDAY 5:30 P.M.

MENU

Fruit cocktail

Roast young tom turkey — Giblet gravy

Sage dressing

Mashed potato — Green peas or squash

Cranberry sauce — Celery

Mixed pickles

Rolls — Butter — Coffee

Fresh garden salad

Assorted ice creams

Orange sherbet — Raspberry sherbet

Frozen pudding

Nut roll — Party roll

Orange cake — Silver cake

Macaroons — Cookies

THE PARADE

DATE: Saturday, August 19th

TIME: 1:30 p.m.

PLACE: To start and finish in front of reviewing stand at the north end of the Common.

PRIZES: To be awarded to the best floats

Outstanding	$50.00
Artistic	25.00
Historical	25.00
Youth Group:	
1st	15.00
2nd	10.00

HISTORICAL AND LITERARY EXERCISES

The Historical and Literary Exercises will be held Sunday, Aug. 13, at 3:30. Curtis Campbell, Chairman of the Tercentenary Committee, will conduct the meeting. The Historical Address, "Three Centuries of Topsfield's History," will be delivered by Mr. James Duncan Phillips, noted historian and author of many books on New England's early history.

It is expected that Senator Henry Cabot Lodge, whose grandfather, Senator Lodge, spoke at the 1900 celebration, will be present and take an active part in these exercises. The Beverly Men's Singing Club will furnish several selections.

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The Committee

An HISTORIC MAP of The TOWN of TOPSFIELD or SHENEWEMEDY 1650-1950
N
W
E
S
BOXFORD
To Boxford Rd
Gilliland 1719
Kinsman's corner
English 1765
Haines 1791
Abbott 1709
Civil War Camp
Cass Farm
Kloss 1744
W.E. Northey 1670
Foster 1803
Bond Site of the First Post Office
Indian mound
Indian Village Site
Pingree Pines
Meredith Farm 1768
Balch 1769
D. Wheatland 1806
Site of Toll House
Stone Bridge
Treadwell 1741
Fair Grounds
Witch Hill
Gregory (Homan) 1768
Pattee 1672
Wellman 1772
Gardiner 1761
Black 1827
MACLEOD LANE
To The Old Copper Mine
Parson Capen's Grave
Robertson 1778
Jordan 1808
Congregational Church 1843
Town Hall 1873
Gould
Manor 1819
Longo 1828
Library
Parsonage 1726
Site of Topsfield Academy 1828
J. Northey 1815
St. Rose Chapel
Site of Topsfield Hotel
Great Hill
Parish House 1853
Parson Capen's 1683
Choate 1814
Towne's Hill
S. Dodge 1797
Site of Peabody Mill
Carothers (French-Andrews) 1675
Veinot (Almshouse) 1767
Arboretum
Center of Essex County
Bradstreet 1771
The Colleges
Proctor Estate
Bradley W. Palmer State Park
Peat Moss
Wenham Swamp
HAMILTON
Topsfield Navyyard
MILE BROOK
IPSWICH RD
HOWLETT
BLAIN
WASHINGTON ST
LOCKWOOD LANE
PROSPECT ST
RIVER RD
BROOK
FISH
ROWLEY BRIDGE
CROSS ST
HILL ST
GARDEN ST
IPSWICH ROAD
RIVER
NEWBURYPORT TURNPIKE
MAIN ST
PEMBURTON RD
MAPLE
CENTRAL ST
HIGH ST
PARKER
SALEM RD
WENHAM RD
VALLEY RD
AVERILL ST
PERKINS ROW
ASBURY RD
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Dry Bridge
Haverhill

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